

CHAPTER NINE

...And the Barren Place Is a Fruitful Field

Those who scoffed at the Mormon pioneers for their desire to create a vigorous economy in the tops of the Rocky Mountains underestimated the faith and determination of this industrious people.

Many said that the barren wastes would never produce crops and that the arid soil would grow nothing but heartache and disappointment.

What these doubting onlookers failed to realize was that the Mormon people really believed in the promise of God that the desert should blossom as a rose, and believed in it strongly enough that they were willing to work together to make it happen.

The faith they possessed is typified in these words of Charles W. Penrose, written in England, as he envisioned the land of Zion:

"In thy mountain retreat, God will strengthen thy feet;
Without fear of thy foes thou shalt tread;
And their silver and gold, as the prophets have told,
Shall be brought to adorn thy fair head."

How true these words really were can be seen in nearly every community that was settled by the hardy Mormon pioneers. It certainly has been true in the growth and development of Heber City.

Of course, Heber's commerce and industry didn't develop overnight, but as it grew, little by little, it began to have an impact over a wide area. The silver and gold of those who once scoffed literally came back to benefit the people. Purebred cattle and horses were sold throughout the country, dairy and farm products found wide acceptance and rich mineral deposits attracted nation-wide mining interests to the area.

The principle of "first things first" motivated the development of Heber City's commerce. Those who came to the valley in the Spring of 1859 had as their first concern the winning of food from the earth to sustain themselves during the long winter months. Thus, agriculture became the first "business" in the valley and it has continued to dominate the commercial scene through the years. The grain raised that summer of 1859 was frost-bitten before it matured, but it was usable and the people were grateful for it. Many ate it cooked whole, while others ground it in small hand mills. John Crook, commenting on the crop that year, said "we ate mush, mush and more mush."

Clothing was also a vital need of the people in the new lands of Provo Valley. They brought some clothing with them to the valley, but as it

See *Cattle Ranching* p146
... AND THE BARREN PLACE IS A FRUITFUL FIELD

145



Beautiful Heber Valley, nestled in the tops of the Wasatch Mountains, shown here in this air view taken in 1959.

wore out and as youngsters grew up there was always the need for more. At first, each family had to make its own cloth, and the weaving industry was on an individual basis. The men would shear wool from the sheep, and then the women would wash it, cord it and spin it into cloth by mixing in some cotton yarns if they were fortunate enough to have cotton on hand. Hand cording was very slow, and whenever possible the wool was taken to Provo to be corded. Later, Moses Cluff built a cording machine in the north-west part of town, constructing a mile-long mill race, hand-dug, to power the machine.

Home-spun cloth served the people for many years, and what it may have lacked in attractiveness it more than made up for in durability and warmth. There were generally two grades of material, linsey and jean.

The first professional weaver in the community was William Aird, who made linsey cloth. As he and others produced more material, home weaving dwindled and generally was confined to carpets and rugs. Some who continued in the weaving business included Roger Horrocks and his wife Sarah Ann, Mary Taylor, Hannah and George Harbour and Sarah Clegg.

Those who made carpets at home would collect cloth rags for many months cutting them into strips and sewing them together, end to end.

and then winding them into large balls. Several gunny-sacks of rag balls were required to make an ordinary size carpet. The carpet was woven in yard widths, and then fitted into the rooms and sewn together. The carpet was laid on a matting of fresh straw to make it soft for walking and more wearable. Fortunate indeed were those who could afford a "carpet stretcher" to help tighten the carpet as it was laid. The few in Heber who did have them were generous in sharing with all the community.

Food had been the most important crop for the early settlers, and as they established gardens and cultivated fields they also introduced stock raising into the valley. Because of the heavy snows that fell during the winters, there were numerous mountain streams and springs and an abundance of meadow-lands. Some wondered if the summer season would be long enough to make stock raising a sound economic possibility, but others reasoned that they could never know until they tried it, so several people brought small flocks of sheep and cattle into the valley in 1860.

President Brigham Young called John M. Murdoch, a shepherd from Scotland and a convert to the Church, to supervise a herd of sheep for the Church. However, by the time he arrived in Utah the sheep had been sold, so Mr. Murdoch came to Heber in 1860 and pioneered co-operative herding. Those who had sheep banded them together in the co-op herd and Mr. Murdoch took charge of them on range-lands in the summer and on southern ranches in the winter. The venture proved very successful, and families who before had been unable to care for sheep now found it possible to own a herd. As people developed their own individual herds, however, the co-op idea soon dwindled. Some of the first sheep owners were the Jacob brothers, Lindsay brothers, Murdocks, Clydes, Clotworthy, Coleman, Austin, Smith, Jessop Thomas and the Fitzgeralds.

The sheep industry grew substantially over the years, and at one time there were more milk fed lambs shipped out of Heber than from any other point in the United States.

The cattle industry grew also, supplying at first the needs of those in the valley and eventually providing beef and other meat products for shipment to Denver and many eastern cities. Some of the major owners of cattle included A. M. Murdock, J. W. Clyde, John Carroll, William Averett and sons, John Witt and sons, the Carliles, Giles, Cummings and Abram Hatch and Sons.

DAIRYING

Dairying in the valley began with individuals who owned one or two cows and would sell their surplus milk or dairy products to neighbors. Later, creameries were established to collect the milk and distribute it on a large scale. Three such creameries have existed in Heber. One,



The Wasatch County Creamery shown here in this 1897 photograph.

owned by Mark Jeffs, was located west of town on the site near where the old gristmill now stands.

Another, which operated for a number of years, was established in 1898 about a mile north of Heber at a place called "The Point." This location is near the present Vern Price farm.

Known as the Wasatch Creamery Company, the firm was begun in 1897 with Abram Hatch, Sr., as president, Ludvig Anderson, secretary-treasurer, Joseph Hatch, general manager and superintendent of construction and Abram Hatch, Jr., plant manager.

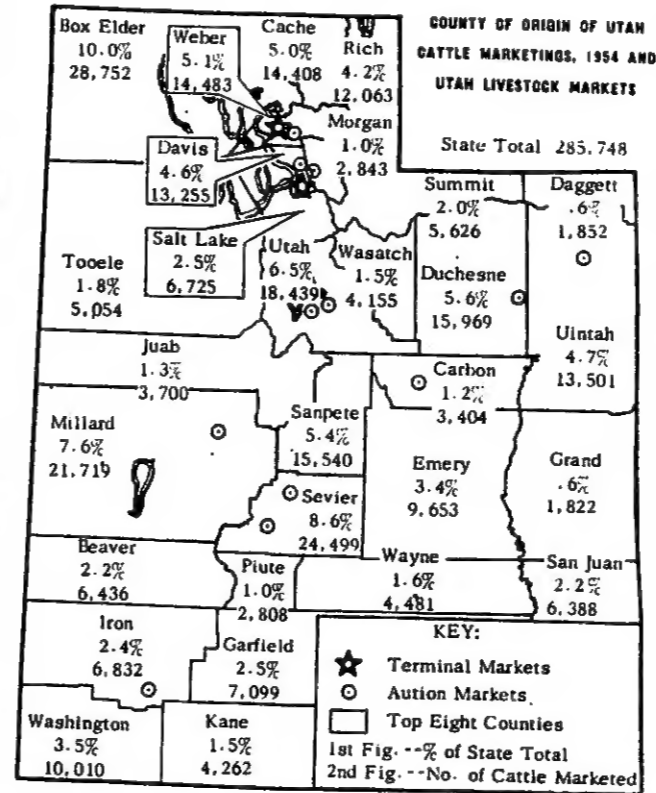
High quality cheeses, butter and other milk products came from the creamery for use in Heber and many parts of the state. There was always a demand in Salt Lake City for cheddar cheese from the Wasatch Creamery.

The creamery's operations declined about 1912 as it became cheaper to haul the milk from Heber to Salt Lake City for processing, and this new competition soon forced the Hatch creamery out of business.

One other creamery that operated in Heber City was the Mutual Creamery Company located at 62 West 2nd North. Many local residents were the stockholders and owners of this mutual company.

The dairy industry today is Heber's largest, but all the milk is hauled by tank trucks from the valley for processing elsewhere, and comes back to the valley properly pasteurized and neatly packaged in cartons or bottles. Milk products from Heber are well known in all the metropolitan areas of Utah.

Utah's cattle marketing in 1954."



Map — courtesy Bureau of Economic & Business Research, U. of U.

Packing industry in Utah

"High class beef cattle are raised in all portions of the state. Many of these are slaughtered and packed in Utah plants and others are shipped to markets in the East or on the Pacific Coast," declared Mr. Madsen.

Ned inquired, "How long have there been meat-packing plants in Utah?"

"Oh, the meat-packing industry began in our state as early as 1860. In that first factory the pioneers smoked bacon and ham to be sold on the market.

"But it was not until refrigeration came into common use during this cen-

1952	99,197	4,160
1953	141,315	4,570
1954	158,153	5,228
1955	165,576	4,948

SOURCE: University of Utah Bureau

tury that the meat-packing industry has become one of Utah's important industries. In 1939 the annual pack was worth nearly \$9,000,000.

"Now, students," the teacher pointed out, "the general trends of the livestock and the meat-packing industries in Utah are shown by this table, which indicates that the livestock slaughtered in the state has increased greatly from 1948 to 1955."

Map — courtesy Bureau of Economic & Business Research, U. of U.

